

(Draft – Awaiting Formal Approval)  
**MINUTES OF THE  
LEGISLATIVE PROCESS COMMITTEE**  
Monday, June 17, 2013 – 2:00 p.m. – Room 445 State Capitol

**Members Present:**

Sen. Lyle W. Hillyard, Senate Chair  
Rep. Melvin R. Brown, House Chair  
Sen. Gene Davis  
Sen. Stephen H. Urquhart  
Rep. Patrice M. Arent  
Rep. Mike K. McKell  
Rep. Lee B. Perry  
Rep. Jennifer M. Seelig

**Staff Present:**

Mr. Jerry D. Howe, Managing Policy Analyst  
Mr. John L. Fellows, General Counsel  
Mr. Eric N. Weeks, Deputy General Counsel  
Ms. Phalin L. Flowers, Administrative Assistant

**Note:** A list of other present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at [www.le.utah.gov](http://www.le.utah.gov).

**1. Committee Business**

Chair Hillyard called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m. Sen. Urquhart participated by phone.

Rep. Brown and members of the committee expressed condolences to Rep. Arent with the recent passing of her father.

**2. Discussion of Legislative Procedural Questions and Issues**

Chair Hillyard explained that prior to the meeting the chairs sent an email to every legislator asking for recommendations to improve the legislative process. He asked that legislators and members of the public send any additional recommendations to committee staff.

Mr. Howe listed items that were submitted by legislators:

- Rep. Jim Nielson asked the committee to consider studying allowing votes on consent, concurrence (final passage), and resolutions that do not deal with rules changes or proposed constitutional amendments to be voice votes;
- Rep. Jim Nielson also asked the committee to consider studying allowing legislators to abstain from voting;
- Sen. Gene Davis asked the committee to consider studying the process of impeachment;
- Sen. Aaron Osmond asked the committee to consider studying the process of enabling legislators to provide their own written “self-description” of their proposed legislation for viewing on the Legislature’s website, which would allow legislators to give their public insight into the proposed legislation;
- Rep. Craig Hall asked the committee to consider studying a requirement that each bill have a committee hearing in the Senate and the House without allowing for suspension of the requirement; and
- Rep. Rebecca Chavez-Houck asked the committee to consider studying a standardized process for posting legislative meeting documents to the Legislature’s website.

Rep. Seelig said that many issues that come before the Legislature fall under more than one subject area. She suggested that the committee study creating a mechanism where the chairs of two different committees could request to have at least one joint meeting to discuss issues that fall under more than one

category. This would include interim committees, standing committees, and appropriations subcommittees.

Rep. Arent asked the committee to consider studying three items:

- Creating an office of constituent services,
- Providing guidance on how bills are placed on the consent calendar, and
- Determining if there are enough days during the annual general session to complete the work of the Legislature.

Sen. Urquhart asked the committee to consider studying two items:

- Ensuring documents and other materials are available electronically for the public in a timely and accurate manner, including during the annual general session; and
- Creating a better allocation of work flow during the annual general session, perhaps by making interim periods more meaningful.

Mr. Fellows noted that the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel has seen a dramatic increase in the amount of bill requests that are made in January since the first day of session was shifted from the third Monday of January to the fourth Monday of January.

Chair Hillyard listed three options that the committee could discuss to create a more efficient work flow during the annual general session:

- Allowing legislators to participate by electronic means,
- Allowing for a voice vote for small items in the Senate, and
- Limiting the number of bills in a more meaningful way.

Rep. Brown suggested that the committee establish principles that will act as a guide to the committee when deciding whether to make changes to the legislative process.

Sen. Davis suggested the committee consider a rule change that would limit the amount of time a bill can be circled on the third reading calendar before it is sent back to the rules committee.

Rep. McKell suggested that a longer interim period with the ability to approve bills during the interim could alleviate some work flow issues during the annual general session.

Mr. Fellows noted that the National Conference of State Legislators conducted a study several years ago that showed the demographic makeup of legislatures changes with the length of their annual general session.

Chair Hillyard opened the meeting for public comment.

Rep. James Dunnigan, member of the Utah House of Representatives, said the Legislature could be more efficient during the first few weeks of the annual general session. He suggested that the public would be better served if all legislation had a committee hearing in both the House and the Senate, rather than just one body.

Mr. Weeks noted that both the House of Representatives and the Utah Senate have a requirement to consider each piece of legislation in a public committee hearing, but that the rule can be suspended by vote of the body.

Rep. Dunnigan also suggested that the committee study the following items:

- Give incentives for legislators to get bills out to the public earlier in the process,
- Allow bills that have received a public hearing in both the House and the Senate to be exempt from sifting during the last days of the annual general session, and
- Make a change to Senate rule that requires a bill to remain on the consent calendar for so many days to include weekend days.

Rep. Jim Nielsen, member of the Utah House of Representatives, reiterated his suggestion that the committee study allowing legislative members to abstain from voting on legislation. He also recommended that the number of days be decreased rather than increased for the annual general session.

### **3. Consideration of Future Study Items**

Chair Hillyard asked members of the committee to draft up some solid proposals for the committee to study and send them to committee staff within a week or two of this meeting.

### **4. Establish Meeting Schedule**

The chairs said they would like the committee to meet once a month. The next meeting was tentatively set for July 15, 2013.

### **5. Other Items / Adjourn**

**MOTION:** Rep. Perry moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously with Sen. Urquhart absent for the vote.

Chair Hillyard adjourned the meeting at 3:12 p.m.